



# Inside CFSA

*For Our Child-Serving Community*

September 23, 2002

Volume 1, Number 9

## CFSA to Revamp Contracted Services

*Agency collaborates with contractors on new approach to doing business.*

**C**FSA has unveiled plans to revamp the way its contractors do business. On August 27, CFSA met with providers at Metropolitan Baptist Church to announce a plan to base contracts for services on outcomes for children, including safety, permanence, and well being, and to discuss how to develop partnerships to accomplishing this vision.

Leticia Lacomba, principal deputy director, stated that we are very excited about this process and see it as a major turning point for improving contracts and services. Most important, it is another step toward our mission of preserving families and building a real safety net for the children of the District of Columbia,

### Why Reform Services? Why Now?

CFSA wants to establish performance-based contract outcomes consistent with the agency's strategic goals and enhance responsiveness of the entire range of service contracts to the current needs of the children and families. Many different stakeholders, including providers and advocates, have highlighted problems with CFSA's past approach to contracting, which generally has not rewarded contractors for accomplishing excellent results for children. For example, a group home or foster care provider that does an excellent job of enabling children to reunify with their families is not rewarded under the current contract system. In addition, CFSA contracts have not reflected the philosophy that young children should be in families rather than congregate care. Our goal is to ensure that our contracts support our goals and also our core values. Thus, CFSA is interested in services that are family-centered, culturally competent, community-based, cost effective, and focused on achieving outcomes--especially permanency for children.

### New Approach for Children and Families

CFSA workgroups are developing three new global Requests for Proposal's (RFPs):

- Congregate Care,
- Family-based Care, and
- Community-based Care/Preventive Services.

Sharlynn Bobo, deputy director for Licensing and Monitoring, stated that to develop the best possible products, the agency will solicit input from prospective providers and foster parents. The agency also expects to conduct research to learn from similar experiences in other states. CFSA also anticipates encouraging links among providers and the Healthy Families/ Thriving Communities Collaboratives as a way of strengthening the community-based focus of service delivery.

In preparation for the contracting changes, existing contracts were recently extended through March 31, 2003. CFSA expects to issue the RFPs in December and to award new contracts in the spring of 2003. ■

### CFSA SOCIAL WORKER IS CAFRITZ AWARD FINALIST

Gwendolyn Bellfield, a 28-year DC government employee and currently a resource development specialist at CFSA has been selected as one of 21 finalists in the third annual Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation Awards for Distinguished DC Government Employees. The competition had 234 nominees this year.

Among her many accomplishments, Gwendolyn initiated the foster parent support group concept. She also mobilized CFSA staff to develop additional foster parent support groups and organizations to recruit within their communities in collaboration with foster parents. Other groups developed from the original foster parent support concept include: Advocates for Kids in Need (AKIN), Foster Parents United for Change, The Proctor Foster Parents, Kinship Foster Parent Group, KinCare, and the Foster Children's Choir.

Through her leadership, Gwen has significantly improved the attitude and morale of foster parents. According to Jean Ellen Wyche, supervisor, Foster Parent Support Services, "Foster parents are now respected for the special person they are ... the agency's most valued in-house resource. Foster parents were over-looked and under-appreciated...until they met Gwendolyn Bellfield."

"She has invested hundreds of hours and thousands of dollars of her personal resources in countless efforts to support the needs of foster families. She has embraced the foster parents, and we have followed her example and embraced each other," said Vivian Ledbetter, president of AKIN.

The annual Cafritz Awards recognize outstanding city government employees. Winners are honored during a celebration dinner and awarded a cash prize. The awards ceremony is scheduled for October 9, 2002, at the World Bank, 1818 H Street, NW. For more information, visit [www.dcagenda.org](http://www.dcagenda.org). ■

---

*CFSA faxes this newsletter monthly to providers and other partners. To provide comments or to update your fax number, call 202-442-6174.*

---